

Wherfore I wol gon her to seen,
Or esed shal I never been,
But I have som tokening.
WHEN gost thou forth without dwelling;
But ofte thou faylest of thy desyre,
Er thou mayst come hir any nere,
And wastest in vayn thy passage.
Than falltest thou in a newe rage;
for want of sight thou ginnest morne,
And homward pensif dost retorne.
In greet mischeef than shalt thou be,
for than agayn shal come to thee
Sighes and pleyntes, with newe wo,
That no icching prikketh so.
Who wot it nought, he may go lere
Of hem that byen love so dere.
Nothing thyn herte appesen may,
That oft thou wolt goon and assay,
If thou mayst seen, by aventure,
Thy lyves joy, thyn hertis cure;
So that, by grace if thou might
Atteyne of hir to have a sight,
Than shalt thou doon non other dede
But with that sight thyn eyen fede.
That faire fresh whan thou mayst see,
Thyn herte shal so ravished be,
That never thou woldest, thy thankis, lete,
Ne remove, for to see that swete.
The more thou sceest in sothfastnesse,
The more thou coveytest of that swetnesse;
The more thyn herte brenneth in fyr,
The more thyn herte is in desyr.
for who considreth every del,
It may be lykned wondir wel,
The peyne of love, unto a fere;
for ever the more thou neigest nere
Thought, or whose that it be,
for verray sothe I telle it thee,
The hatter ever shal thou brenne,
As experience shal thee kenne.
Wherso thou comest in any cost,
Who is next fyr, he brenneth most.
And yit forsothe, for al thyn hete,
Though thou for love swelte and swete,
Ne for nothing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passe away.
And though thou go, yet must thee nede
Thenke alday on hir fairhede,
Whom thou bihelde with so good wille;
And holde thysilf bigyled ille,
That thou ne haddest non hardement
To shewe hir ought of thyn entent.
Thyn herte ful sore thou wolt dispyse,
And eek repreve of cowardyse,
That thou, so dulle in every thing,
Were dom for drede, without speking.
Thou shalt eek thenke thou didest foly,
That thou were hir so faste by,
And durst not aunte thee to say
Somthing, er thou cam away;
for thou haddist no more wonne,
To speke of hir whan thou bigonne:
But yif she wolde, for thy sake,
268

In armes goodly thee have take,
It shulde have be more worth to thee
Chan of tresour greet plentee.
HAS shalt thou morne and cek compleyn,
And gete enchesoun to goon ageyn
Unto thy walk, or to thy place,
Where thou biheld hir fleshy face,
And never, for fals suspencion,
Thou woldest finde occasioun
for to gon unto hir hous.
So art thou thanne desirous
A sight of hir for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any erand mightist make
Thider, for thy loves sake;
ful fayn thou woldist, but for drede
Thou gost not, lest that men take hede.
Wherfore I rede, in thy going,
And also in thyn ageyn coming,
Thou be wel war that men ne wit;
feyne thee other cause than it
To go that weye, or faste by;
To hele wel is no folye.
And if so be it happe thee
That thou thy love ther mayst see,
In siker wyse thou hir salewe,
Wherwith thy colour wol transmewe,
And eke thy blood shal al toquake,
Thyn hewe eek chaungen for hir sake,
But word and wit, with chere ful pale,
Shul wante for to telle thy tale.
And if thou mayst so ferforth winne,
That thou thy resoun durst beginne,
And woldist seyn three thingis or mo,
Thou shalt ful scarsly seyn the two.
Though thou bithenke thee never so wel,
Thou shalt foryete yit somdel,
But if thou dele with trecherye,
for fals lovers mowe al folye
Seyn, what hem lust, withouten drede,
They be so double in hir falsbede;
for they in herte kunne thenke a thing
And seyn another, in hir speking.
And whan thy speche is endid al,
Right thus to thee it shal bifal;
If any word than come to minde,
That thou to seye hast left bihinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in greet martyr;
for thou shalt brenne as any fyr.
This is the stryf and eke the affray,
And the batail that lastith ay.
This bargeyn ende may never take,
But if that she thy pees wil make.
AND whan the night is comen, anon
A thousand angres shal come upon.
To bedde as fast thou wolt thee dight,
Where thou shalt have but smal delyt;
for whan thou weneest for to slepe,
So ful of peyne shalt thou crepe,
Sterte in thy bedde aboute ful wyde,
And turne ful ofte on every syde;
Now downward groffe, and now upright,
And walowe in wo the longe night,

Thyn armis shalt thou sprede abrede,
As man in were were forwerreyd.
Chan shal thee come a remembrance
Of hir shape and hir semblance,
Wherto non other may be pere.
And wite thou wel, withoute were,
That thee shal seme, somtyme that night,
That thou hast hir, that is so bright,
Naked bitwene thyn armes there,
Al sothfastnesse as though it were.
Thou shalt make castels than in Spayne,
And drewe of joye, al but in vayne,
And thee delyten of right nought,
Whyl thou so slomrest in that thought,
That is so swete and delitable,
The which, in soth, nis but a fable,
for it ne shal no whyle laste.
Chan shalt thou sighe and wepe faste,
And say: Dere God, what thing is this?
My drewe is turned al amis,
Which was ful swete and apparent,
But now I wake, it is al shent!
Now yede this mery thought away!
Twenty tymes upon a day
I wolde this thought wolde come ageyn,
for it allegith wel my peyn.
It makith me ful of joyful thought,
It sleeth me, that it lastith noght.
A Lord! why nil ye me socoure,
The joye, I trowe, that I langoure?
The deth I wolde me shulde slo
Whyl I lye in hir armes two.
Myn harm is hard, withouten wene,
My greet unese ful ofte I mene.
But wolde Love do so I might
Have fully joye of hir so bright,
My peyne were quit me richely.
Alas, to greet a thing aske I!
It is but folly, and wrong wening,
To aske so outrageous a thing.
And whoso askith folily,
He moot be warned hastily;
And I ne wot what I may say,
I am so fer out of the way;
for I wolde have ful gret lyking
And ful gret joye of lasse thing.
for wolde she, of hir gentillesse,
Withouten more, me onis kesse,
It were to me a greet guerdoun,
Relees of al my passioun.
But it is hard to come therto;
Al is but folly that I do,
So high I have myn herte set,
Where I may no comfort get.
I noot wher I sey wel or nought;
But this I wot wel in my thought,
That it were bet of hir aloon,
for to stinte my wo and moon,
A loke on me ycast goodly,
Chan for to have, al utterly,
Of another al hool the pley.
A Lord! wher I shal byde the day
That ever she shal my lady be?

He is ful cured that may hir see.
A! God! whan shal the dawning spring?
To ly thus is an angry thing;
I have no joye thus here to ly
Whan that my love is not me by.
A man to lyen hath gret disece,
Which may not slepe ne reste in ese.
I wolde it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away;
for were it day, I wolde upryse.
A! slowe sonne, shew thyn enpryse!
Speed thee to sprede thy bemis bright,
And chace the derknesse of the night,
To putte away the stoundes stronge,
Which in me lasten al to longe.
THIS night shalt thou contene so,
Withoute rest, in peyne and wo;
If ever thou knewe of love distresse,
Thou shalt mowe lerne in that siknesse.
And thus enduring shalt thou ly,
And ryse on morwe up erly
Out of thy bedde, and harneys thee
Er ever dawning thou mayst see.
Al privily than shalt thou goon,
What weder it be, thysilf aloon,
for reyn, or hayl, for snow, for slete,
Thider she dwelleth that is so swete,
The which may falle aslepe be,
And thenkith but litel upon thee.
Than shalt thou goon, ful foule aferd;
Loke if the gate be unsperd,
And waite without in wo and peyn,
ful yvel acold in winde and reyn.
Than shalt thou go the dore bifore,
If thou maist fynde any score,
Or hole, or reft, whatever it were;
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to ere,
If they within aslepe be;
I mene, alle save thy lady free.
Whom waking if thou mayst aspye,
Go put thysilf in jupartye,
To aske grace, and thee bimene,
That she may wite, withouten wene,
That thou anight no rest hast had,
So sore for hir thou were bistad.
Wommen wel ought pite to take
Of hem that sorwen for hir sake.
And loke, for love of that relyke,
That thou thenke non other lyke,
for whom thou hast so greet annoy,
Shal kisse thee er thou go away,
And hold that in ful gret deyntee.
And, for that no man shal thee see
Bifore the hous, ne in the way,
Loke thou be goon ageyn er day.
Suche coming, and such going,
Such hevynesse, and such walking,
Makith lovers, withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
for Love leveth colour ne cleernesce;
Who loveth trewe hath no fatnesse.
Thou shalt wel by thysilf see
That thou must nedis assayed be.